



OFFICE OF
**INSPECTOR
GENERAL**
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

HIGHLIGHTS

August 20, 2013

Employee and Labor Relations Manual Revisions

Report Number HR-AR-13-005

BACKGROUND:

The *Employee and Labor Relations Manual* (ELM) contains policies and regulations governing U.S. Postal Service employment, including organizational structure, pay administration, employee benefits, employee relations, training and development, safety, health and environment, and labor relations. Management periodically revises sections of the ELM to reflect changes to Postal Service policies or regulations. The ELM is frequently cited by both internal and external stakeholders in matters concerning Postal Service employment; therefore, it is vital that it contains information that is current and in agreement with Postal Service policy.

Our objective was to assess the process Postal Service officials use to update the ELM.

WHAT THE OIG FOUND:

The process for updating the ELM needs improvement. Specifically, overall guidance governing ELM revisions had not been updated since 1996 and various sections contained obsolete information. Also, management had not comprehensively reviewed and updated the ELM since its publication in 1978 to ensure that all changes have been properly included and the document is

current, accurate, and complete. Finally, the Postal Service has not clearly identified functional organizations responsible for specific ELM content to ensure they authorize revisions as appropriate because the overall guidance governing ELM revisions does not require that level of detail.

Policy guidance must contain information that is current, accurate, complete, and in agreement with Postal Service policy. Properly updating the ELM minimizes the possibility of expensive and embarrassing consequences to the Postal Service.

WHAT THE OIG RECOMMENDED:

We recommended management implement procedures to update the ELM on a regular basis and clearly identify functional organizations responsible for specific content and communicate that information to appropriate stakeholders. Management updated the overall guidance for revising the ELM to incorporate suggestions made by the OIG and other stakeholders effective June 26, 2013. As a result, we did not make any recommendations regarding ELM policy guidance.